

## University of Groningen

### A mouth full of Dutch

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# A mouth full of Dutch

## Syrian refugees learning Dutch

Science Shop Language, Culture and Communication

Stephanie Berghuis  
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Applied Linguistics

### How to learn Dutch as effectively as possible: a question from a group of refugees.

Sometimes your future depends on learning a new language. Refugees who want to find a job in the Netherlands have to reach a high level of Dutch. Therefore, a group of seven motivated Syrian refugees wanted to practice more Dutch with native speakers. Three students of the UG were willing to help the refugees and apply in practice their theoretical knowledge about learning a language. On the other hand, the refugees helped the students with their language research, resulting in both groups helping each other.



### Language research on feedback, language anxiety and motivation

The students of the UG did both theoretical and practical research on three different factors that can influence the language learning process:

**Feedback:** how to give effective feedback and which type of feedback language learners prefer.

**Language anxiety:** how to deal with language learners that suffer from language anxiety and what steps they can take to overcome this.

**Motivation:** how students can set their own goals to stay motivated.



“Always ask for written feedback so that you can read it again some time later.”

“Afraid to speak the language? Practice with native speakers with whom you feel comfortable.”

“Set small reachable goals for yourself constantly, they will keep you motivated.”

### Ten weeks of communication

The language meetings with the Syrian students took place over a course of 10 weeks in which the communicative approach was applied: language learning throughout the context with authentic materials, small groups, less grammar and more focus on discussions and communication. The approach resulted in a comfortable climate during the meetings, more personal attention and progression in the learning process.

#### Personal Language Development

